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TO: Directors of Financial Aid  
Public and Private/Independent Institutions of Higher Education

FROM: DeChà Reid  
Director, Financial Aid Services

DATE: January 9, 2019

RE: Federal Government Shutdown and the 2019-20 State Priority Deadline Date

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) has received several inquiries regarding the partial federal government shutdown and the potential impact on the upcoming 2019-20 State Priority Deadline (January 15). The THECB encourages institutions to ***use the filing date on the FAFSA as the basis for meeting the state priority deadline***, since the Department of Education (ED) is not included in the partial shutdown and is still processing FAFSAs that are submitted by students.

As a reminder, only general academic teaching institutions (e.g., public four-year institutions and the Lamar state colleges) are required to utilize the state priority deadline. Based on [Texas Administrative Code \(TAC\) 22.6](#), the priority deadline is not to serve as a determination of eligibility for state financial assistance, but otherwise eligible students who apply on or before the deadline shall be given priority consideration for available state financial assistance before other applicants. The Program Guidelines clarify that institutions may define how students must meet the priority deadline. Therefore, institutions can choose to accept the filing date on the FAFSA as the basis for meeting the state priority deadline. While other public and private institutions are encouraged to use the state priority deadline, they are not bound by TAC §22.6.

The agency recognizes that the partial federal government shutdown may impact a student that requires some FAFSA database matches to verify eligibility through the Selective Service System (SS), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), or Department of Justice (DOJ). It is not clear at this time the extent of the impact of the shutdown on FAFSA database matches through these agencies, however the agency will continue to encourage students to file the FAFSA in a timely manner and not to delay their submission based on a partial federal government shutdown. The THECB will continue to monitor information provided by ED and NASFAA to identify any additional guidance to assist with processing state financial aid programs.

For questions, please contact Financial Aid Services at (844) 792-2640 or [CONTACT US](#) (select the "Financial Aid Question" option in the drop-down selection under Contact Reason).